



JOSHUA

The Faithfulness of God

LEADER GUIDE

FROM THE EDITOR

The January Bible Study 2025 Leader Guide is intended to help those who will teach JBS. Included in this guide are:

TEACHING PLANS—The teaching plans, beginning on page 4, are designed for seven sessions using the 2025 January Bible Study Personal Study Guide, *Joshua: The Faithfulness of God*. The table of contents shows how the chapters in the Personal Study Guide are addressed in this Leader Guide.

The Personal Study Guide (PSG) has been designed as a teaching resource. Each adult will need his or her own PSG. Each teaching plan suggests ways a teacher can use the PSG during the session.

A variety of questions and learning activities in the PSG will help readers understand and apply the Scriptures to their lives. An alternate plan for teaching this study could consist of short lectures combined with small or large group discussion of the questions and learning activities.

EXPOSITORY NOTES—The expository notes, beginning on page 24, provide in-depth commentary for a teacher's use.

PREACHING GUIDE—The preaching guide, beginning on page 72, provides sermon outlines and ideas for the pastor who wishes to emphasize the theme of JBS 2025 from the pulpit.

SUPPORT DOWNLOAD—The support download includes everything in this Leader Guide as well as additional teaching helps such as teaching items, PowerPoint® backgrounds, clip art, and planning and promotion ideas. See the inside back cover for information about securing these files.

Do you ever wonder what to do with all this material when January Bible Study is over? Here are some suggestions: Conduct a weekly Bible study for business people or stay-at-home mothers. Conduct a weeknight study for apartment dwellers, mobile home residents, or language or ethnic groups. Or conduct a weekend retreat for singles, students, or an Adult Sunday School class. Whatever you do in JBS, we pray that these materials will enhance this study and that lives will be changed as a result.

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LIFE BY DESIGN

We live in a broken world. This brokenness is seen in suffering, violence, poverty, pain, and death around us. Brokenness leads us to search for a way to make life work.

The Bible tells us God originally planned a world that worked perfectly, where everything and everyone fit together in harmony. God made each of us with a purpose: to worship Him and walk with Him (Genesis 1:31; Psalm 19:1).

Life doesn't work when we ignore God and His original design for our lives. We selfishly insist on doing things our own way. The Bible calls this sin. Sin leads to a place of brokenness. The consequence of our sin is separation from God—in this life and for all eternity (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

We need a remedy—some good news. Because of His love, God did not leave us in our brokenness. Jesus, God in human flesh, came to us and lived perfectly according to God's design. Jesus came to rescue us—to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. He took our sin and shame to the cross, paying the penalty of our sin by His death. Jesus was then raised from the dead to provide the only way for

us to be rescued and restored to a relationship with God (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 2:14).

We cannot escape this brokenness on our own. We need to be rescued. We must ask God to forgive us, turning from sin to trust in Jesus. This is what it means to repent and believe. Believing, we receive new life through Jesus, and God turns our lives in a new direction (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 2:8-9).

When God restores our relationship to Him, we begin to discover meaning and purpose in a broken world. Now we can pursue God's design in all areas of our lives. God's Spirit empowers us to recover His design and assures us of His presence in this life and for all of eternity (Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13).

Now that you have heard this good news, God wants you to respond to Him. You can talk to Him using words like these: My life is broken; I recognize it's because of my sin. I believe Christ came to live, die, and was raised from the dead to rescue me from my sin. Forgive me. I turn from my selfish ways and put my trust in You. I know Jesus is Lord of all, and I will follow Him.

MEET THE WRITERS

KIMA JUDE wrote the teaching plans for this resource. She is a member of The Oaks Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas, where she leads the women's ministry and her husband Barry serves as pastor. Kima has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Marshall University and had an early career as a newspaper reporter followed by a freelance writing career. She has written for several Christian publications, including Lifeway's *January Bible Study* and several *Explore the Bible* group plans.

She is employed full time at a local university in the Dallas-Fort Worth region directing foundation relations and writing proposals. She and her husband are the parents of four young adult children and three young grandchildren. She looks forward to helping them discover the wonders of the Bible.

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TEACHING PLANS



YOUR NOTES

FAITHFUL TO REVEAL A NEW BEGINNING

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read the book of Joshua from the Bible, as you would read a novel, immersing yourself in the story.
- Read the Joshua Introduction and Chapter 1 in the Personal Study Guide as well as the related Expository Notes in this Leader Guide.
- Pray for the group that will be engaged in the January Bible Study.
- Gather Personal Study Guides, extra Bibles, and pens for the group.
- Make copies of **Teaching Item 1: Highlights of Moses and His Journey** and **Teaching Item 2: Tracing Joshua's Story**. Be prepared to display **Teaching Item 3: Map of Israel** by downloading and printing or projecting.

LEADING THE SESSION

Introduce the study as a captivating look at one of the most action-oriented books in the Bible, Joshua, named for the successor to Moses and leader of the Israelites. Distribute copies of **Teaching Item 1: Highlights of Moses and His Journey** and invite the group to briefly share and record facts and insights from their knowledge of Moses's life, as context for the study on Joshua.

Point out that the book of Joshua is a climax to a story that began with Abraham. Call on a volunteer to read Deuteronomy 34. Draw the group's attention to the PSG outline of terms of

chronography, geography, and autobiography for the session study in Joshua. Point out that a novelist writing Joshua's story likewise may use terms such as setting (time and place), character, and plot. Share copies of **Teaching Item 2: Tracing Joshua's Story** as a tool for taking notes during the session.

1. Call on a volunteer to read Joshua 1:1-3. Direct the group to identify and mark any words that indicate chronography or timing in the passage (after, now). Guide the group to share thoughts on the death of an individual that had significant impact on them personally, the group, or their community. Suggest that Moses's death represented a watershed moment for Joshua and the Israelites. Remind the group that Moses had led the Israelites for the past forty years through victories and calamities, to accolades and criticism and complaints. Highlight the word "now" and inform the group that thirty days, a period of mourning, had passed since Moses's death, and God was formally releasing them from the grieving period and mobilizing them. Direct the group to silently read the writer's note on time on pages 11-13 in the PSG in reference to the gift of the promised land in verses 2 and 3. Stress the writer's corollary to salvation as a gift we have received and will receive. Note also that the time had come to finish the task of inhabiting the promised land.

2. Invite a volunteer to read Joshua 1:4-5. Draw the group's attention back to verses 2 and 3, which provide specifics on the

Israelites' location. Use **Teaching Item 3: Map of Israel** to help the group see where God was commanding the Israelites to go and to pinpoint the locations cited. Call on a volunteer to read Genesis 15:18-21 to remind the group that God had been just as specific when He made His original promise to Abraham. Point to the phrase "where the sole of your foot treads" (v. 3) and discuss the ramifications in relation to geography. Direct the group's attention to the importance of God's promise to give all the land and provide His protection—and the importance of Israel accepting the challenge to take all the land promised. Draw the group's attention to verse 5 and discuss the importance of the promise of God's presence and protection.

3. Call on a volunteer to read Joshua 1:6-9. Invite the group to outline what they know about Joshua, beginning with his being Moses's assistant and successor. Note that the PSG writer alludes to autobiography, or as a novelist may put it, the character in the story. Suggest that while God has a plan for our lives, we must respond to that call to participate in it and help write our own stories.

Lead the group to identify the instruction that God repeated to Joshua three times in the passage: "Be strong and courageous." Discuss the courage required to execute the strategy and determine if that kind of courage may be conjured outside of God's strength. **Ask: If we agree that anything God repeats is critical, would you consider this a command, inspiration, encouragement, or all three?**

Suggest that the group put themselves in Joshua's shoes to imagine his state of mind. Lead the group to connect the directives to take courage with the detailed instructions

that proceeded or followed. Discuss the connection between success in the task at hand and lifetime success. Direct the group to complete the activity **Courage in So Many Words** on page 18 in the PSG for more insight.

4. Invite a volunteer to read Joshua 1:10-18 and note that Joshua found the courage required because he gave the people three days to get ready. Direct the group's attention to the PSG, pages 17-18 for better insight into what the writer terms an "altered biography": the decision of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh to dwell on the east side of Jordan but assist the Israelites as they crossed over. Remind the group that they were content with the land there, but these tribes also promised to send their officers to fight when the time came. Suggest that Moses may not have been pleased with their suggestion because it divided the group but gave permission with that agreement. **Propose: Looking at the situation, what is your opinion of their actions now? Did these tribes rob themselves by surrendering the opportunity for unified land? What do you imagine would be different if they had stuck to the original plan?**

Point out that the tribes kept their word and sent their best officers to support the move into the promised land. **Ask: What does that teach us about the importance of keeping our word?**

Direct the group to complete **My Word, My Bond** activity on page 15 in the PSG. Encourage them not to miss any part of the exciting journey. Pray for the group's courage and success and that they would dwell in the place of God's blessing.

EXPOSITORY NOTES



INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Purpose

The book of Joshua provides an account of the Lord's leadership of His people, Israel, so they could inherit the land that He promised to give them. He made the promise to Abraham, and He fulfilled it when He directed Joshua to lead the Israelites so they could conquer and settle Canaan. The account reflects the Lord's faithfulness to His people. At the same time, it underscores the responsibility of His people to devote themselves to Him willingly, sincerely, and obediently.

Author and Date

The identity of the person who authored the book of Joshua has been shrouded in mystery. No one can say with certainty who wrote it. Speculation has swirled around the possibility that Joshua himself may have been the author. The reason for the speculation has to do with two references in the account itself: Joshua wrote the law of Moses on an altar made of stones at Mount Ebal (8:32), and he also recorded the account of Israel's covenant renewal at Shechem (24:26). However, the two references alone do not provide enough support for naming Joshua as the author. Other possibilities regarding authorship are just as tentative.

Uncertainty about the author of this book does not diminish the absolute certainty regarding its reliability (2 Timothy 3:16). The Holy Spirit inspired the unidentified writer to put into words a perfectly reliable account of how the Lord led Israel to conquer and settle the promised land.

The time frame in which the book of Joshua was written has also been debated. The information in the book itself does not suggest that it would have been written during or immediately following the events it chronicled. The statement "still today" can be found throughout the book (Joshua 4:9; 7:26; 13:13; 14:14; 16:20) and, in context, leaves the impression that a considerable amount of time passed before the book was completed. These statements hint that it may have been written during King David's reign over Israel.¹

Setting

The account of Joshua's leadership in Israel's quest to conquer and settle the land of Canaan has an inseparable connection with the first five books of the Bible. The book of Joshua also has the distinction of being the first in a section of Bible books devoted to what has been known as history. This section begins with Joshua and ends with 2 Chronicles. Even so, its linkage with the Pentateuch cannot be overlooked. For instance, Israel's unending

1. Paul Wright, *Joshua and Judges* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1998), Jos.

quest to occupy the land of Canaan chronicled in Joshua has a bedrock foundation in the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:6-7. It was passed along to Joseph, Abraham's great grandson, who was responsible for Israel's move to Egypt.

After four centuries, the descendants of Abraham continued to live in Egypt but not in freedom: they became slaves to the Egyptians. The Lord set out to liberate them, and He called Moses to lead in their liberation. The inheritance He promised to Abraham served as the reason for the call of Moses. The Lord called Moses to deliver Abraham's descendants—the Israelites—out of their slavery in Egypt. He directed Moses to lead them so they could inherit the land that He promised Abraham. With the promise constantly in view, He guided Moses as he led the Israelites on a journey through the wilderness that lasted four decades. The journey started with the Israelites leaving Egypt and ended with them setting up camp on the edge of Canaan. The account of Moses and his leadership of Israel's twelve tribes through the wilderness takes in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Information about the identity of Joshua and his emerging role as the leader of Israel after Moses comes from those same Bible books. Originally, his name was Hoshea, but Moses changed it to Joshua (Numbers 13:16). The change in his name underscored the role that the Lord played in leading Israel through the wilderness. In the Hebrew language, the name Hoshea brought salvation to mind; however, the name Joshua carried the idea that salvation came from the Lord.²

He was a young man when he served Moses as his faithful assistant (Exodus 33:11). His work with Moses provided him with unique opportunities that prepared him well to be an effective leader. For instance, Moses selected him to lead the Israelites in their battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-9). Also, Joshua accompanied Moses when he received the tablets on Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:15-17). In addition, he had the opportunity to listen as Moses talked with the Lord in the tent of meeting (Exodus 33:7-11). Along with Caleb, he wanted to follow the Lord's leadership at Kadesh-barnea and take possession of Canaan while ten other Israelite spies stood against it (Numbers 14:5-9). Consequently, the Lord declared that nobody in that generation of Israelites, except Joshua and Caleb, would go into the promised land (Numbers 14:20-38). Later, the Lord directed Moses to commission Joshua as the next leader of Israel (Numbers 27:12-23). Following Moses as the new leader proved to be challenging for Joshua. However, his walk with the Lord rendered the depth of spiritual maturity necessary to address the challenges and lead Israel effectively (Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9).

Summary

The book of Joshua can be divided into three sections: The first section, Joshua 1–12, covers Israel's conquest of Canaan. The second section, Joshua 13–21, provides information about the distribution of the land and cities to the twelve Israelite tribes. The third section, Joshua 22–24, includes Joshua's farewell speeches and Israel's covenant renewal. In each section, the light shines on the Lord's faithfulness to the Israelites and Joshua's willingness to follow Him. As a result, Joshua led them well, and they inherited the "land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 33:3).

2. David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua*, vol. 5, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 27–28.

Themes

YOUR NOTES

Throughout this inspiring Bible book, three major themes provide helpful insights for God's people. Although these themes emerge in the Old Testament, they are relevant for New Testament believers who want to grow toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

The Lord keeps His promises. When He led Abraham to Canaan, He made a promise: He promised Abraham that he would inherit the land. Generations later, God kept His promise when Joshua led Israel to settle Canaan. Likewise, He promised to send the Messiah, and He kept that promise when Jesus arrived in Bethlehem. The miracles of Jesus's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection confirm that He is the promised Messiah. When Jesus ascended to heaven, His promise to return encouraged His disciples. Today, believers continue to live in the certainty that He will keep His promise.

The Lord directs His people. The Lord kept His promise to the Israelites by being directly involved with them. He did not leave His people alone so they would have to figure out on their own how to inherit the land He promised them. God led them through each of the challenges that awaited them, and He strengthened them so they could take possession of the land. So, the Israelites could rest in the assurance that He would protect them as they settled the promised land. God also involved Himself in their lives intimately, so they would continue to grow spiritually and remain loyal to Him. He continues to direct His people in keeping with His promise to give us spiritual rest in Him that lasts for eternity.

The Lord strengthens His leaders. The Lord directed His people by preparing Joshua to be their leader as they made their way into Canaan. He nurtured Joshua so he would be spiritually fit for the task of leading the Israelites to claim their inheritance. Joshua's faith in Him rendered a heart of complete devotion. He lived out his faith in the Lord each day. As a result, the Lord guided him every step of the way toward the fulfillment of His promise to Israel. Believers today can rest in the assurance of the Lord's constant presence. Abiding in Him nourishes an awareness of His strength in our lives.

PREACHING GUIDE

When the Lord Calls

JOSHUA 1:1-9

The Lord is faithful to call His people to serve Him and to be leaders. The church needs strong Christian leaders, and so does the world around us. Joshua shows us that the Lord is faithful to call His people.

The Lord calls us in keeping with His plan (vv. 1-5).

- He called Joshua to carry out His plan so Israel could receive the inheritance in the promised land.
- He calls believers to carry out His eternal plan to share the good news of Christ, so people everywhere can be born again and grow toward maturity in Him.

The Lord calls us with an awareness of our frailties (vv. 6-9).

- He knows we step into our leadership roles with weakness and insecurity.
- He helps us grow stronger and more courageous so we can carry out His plan.
- He shows us that spiritual strength and courage come from an intimate relationship with Him.

Living out God's call on our lives starts with surrendering to Him.

Working Together

JOSHUA 1:10-18

The Lord is faithful to prepare His people so that we will work together to carry out His plan. Joshua's work with the Israelites demonstrates that the Lord brings unity to His people as we serve Him together.

The Lord opens our eyes to shared opportunities (vv. 10-15).

- Joshua directed the Israelites to see their inheritance and the need to prepare for it together.

The Lord strengthens our fellowship in spiritual unity (vv. 16-18).

- The Lord enables believers to grasp the possibilities that result from fellowship shaped by spiritual unity.

When we open our lives to Him, He can strengthen our fellowship as we serve Him.

THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU.

After 40 years of wandering the desert, the people of God found themselves at a turning point. Moses was dead and buried. A new godly leader, Joshua, had risen in his place. Would the people continue to trust in the promises of God and follow Him? Through this 7-session Bible study, you'll see how God was faithful to the people of Israel as they prepared to enter and ultimately took possession of the land He had promised. And you'll realize how the faithfulness of God through Joshua points to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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